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AN APPEAL

TO

THE SOBER UNDERSTANDINGS

OF

ENGLISHMEN, *k*

ON

THE PRESENT STATE

OF

IRELAND.

"ARMS EXCEPT THEY HAVE A ROOT IN POLICY
"ARE ALTOGETHER FRUITLESS."

PREROG. OF POPUL. GOVERN.

London :

PRINTED BY J. BATESON, DENMARK STREET, SOHO,
FOR

J. HATCHARD, NO. 173, PICCADILLY.

1797.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE observations now submitted to the Public on the present state of Ireland were nearly ready for the Press, some months ago: I knew the facts on which they were founded to be true; and I thought them entitled to serious attention, from their immediate influence on the best and dearest interests of this and the sister kingdom: Still, the critical situation of Great Britain in respect to Ireland, the important disclosure made by the Report of the Secret Committee, and the new system which began to be developed of governing Ireland by

II.

military discipline, discouraged me from communicating my remarks, lest, in such an eventful moment, they might inflame the passions of men, though meant to be addressed to their reason and their judgment.

I was actuated, likewise, by another motive, in with-holding the publication : It has the appearance of injustice to pre-judge any system, whatever opinions we may entertain of its policy ; a fair trial even of the most unpromising plan, may perhaps be plausibly claimed by its projectors.---The trial has now been made ; we see the effect it has produced ;----we see, that, within these six months, it has tripled the number of United Irishmen I fear it has indissolubly rivetted their bond of union.

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III.

The attention of the Public has been much drawn to the affecting statement made by Lord MOIRA in the House of Lords, and their humanity has been shocked by his description of the calamitous situation of Ireland. I have not the honour of being known to Lord Moira ; but I am no stranger to his public virtues---to his meritorious exertions in the cause of freedom---to his ardent zeal for the public good. His name stands too high in the estimation of the country, to admit any doubt of the truth and authenticity of the facts he has brought forward :---they not only bear me out in my assertions, but go infinitely beyond any thing I have stated in the course of my remarks. I have foreborne to dwell on particular acts of outrage and
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IV.

oppression for the same reason which deterred the noble Lord ;---they may be charged on individuals, and I hope and trust they may with truth be confined to them. My objection was to a system of measures publicly and deliberately adopted --nay, within these few nights publicly and deliberately justified and avowed by men of the most splendid talents, in the most enlightened and dignified assembly of the civilized world. It is time, therefore, that the question should be impartially canvassed by thinking men, and the propriety of the system carried on in Ireland dispassionately examined, that the public may judge for themselves, whether the Executive Government is in truth pursuing judicious measures, and consulting the interests of their country ; or whether they
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are irrevocably alienating the affections of the Irish, and paving the way to a speedy dismemberment of the British Empire. If the hopes held out by his Majesty's Ministers, when this system was first resolved on, have been found altogether illusory; if, instead of peace, order, and good government, which we were taught to expect from the strong measures pursued, and which (desirable as they are in their own nature) would have been dearly purchased by the unconstitutional means resorted to for their attainment,---we have, in fact, reaped nothing but violence, disorder, and disaffection; what remains, but to relinquish the system we before embraced, and to adopt one directly opposite? If the passions of men have been inflamed by measures of severity;

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rity; if, unprotected by mild laws and unrestrained by severe ones, they have broken out into the last and most daring acts of outrage, and have perpetrated the murders and assassinations imputed to them; we surely are not wholly exculpated, in having abandoned these ignorant misguided men to the dictates of their private malice and personal resentment, instead of shewing them, by a mild form of government, and an impartial dispensation of its benefits, the interest they have in conforming to the laws of their country.

But, it is said, we have neither the right nor the means of interfering in the internal Government of Ireland: This ground was occupied the other night in the House of Lords, as it was a few months

VII.

months ago in the House of Commons.--

I have considered this question, in the course of my remarks : let the Public judge whether this preliminary objection is for a moment tenable.---Would to God we had not the power of interfering by means of influence and corruption, by a venal Parliament, by hirelings and pensioners, who abandon their own country as a place of residence, but fasten on its produce and fatten on its spoils ! These are the Legislators, the *Noli-me-tangere*'s, whose rights and privileges and independent powers we are supposed to invade, if we venture to suggest any measure which tends to calm the distracted state of Ireland, to reconcile contending interests, to heal rancorous animosities, and to sow the seeds of returning confidence and
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VIII.

affection between the two countries !---
I greatly deceive myself, if the statement of such a proposition is not ridiculous upon the face of it. Of as little weight as the argument of *impropriety*, is the argument of *danger* arising from the agitation of this question. Much *danger*, I undoubtedly apprehend, from a continuance of the measures pursuing in Ireland. I will not limit to five years, in the worst supposable case, the annexation of this most important branch of the British Empire to its parent trunk, because I have no *data* to enable me to judge in how long or short a period of time it may be detached from our interests; circumstances which no wisdom can foresee must govern this event: but persons of every persuasion seem to concur in thinking

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IX.

ing that the French will lose no opportunity of availing themselves of the disorders which prevail in Ireland: what progress they make must depend on the dispositions of its inhabitants; but whether a system of terror and coercion, or an entire new plan of government, founded upon the basis of conciliation, and tending to ameliorate the condition and reform the grievances of the Irish, will best dispose them to preserve their allegiance, is a question which seems so obvious as to admit little doubt; yet it is in truth the only question at present for the consideration of the Executive Government of this country. It becomes, then, the duty of a good subject in and out of Parliament, however limited his abilities, however circumscribed his sphere of action,

action, to press this subject home to the
 attentive examination of his countrymen.
 Let Ministers be ever so determined in
 any system, they must obey at last the voice
 of opinion, if it can but be fairly and un-
 equivocally collected. On many subjects
 of great national importance, men are
 too indolent to take the trouble of form-
 ing any opinion: but, if ever there was
 a question which in every shape and as-
 pect it can assume must interest the
 minds of Englishmen, it is that which
 determines the fate of Ireland and the
 liberties of Irishmen. The fortunes of
 the two countries seem, from their
 relative situation and the similarity of
 their interests, inseparably intervoven;---
 they must stand or fall together. *Concordiâ
 ambo crescent, discordia ambo dilabentur.*

AN APPEAL,

Æc. Æc. Æc.

THE Irish, from the earliest times, have been celebrated as a brave but turbulent people: the conflicts in which they have been engaged, and their relative situation to this country, have in a great measure determined their national character: much in it we find, undoubtedly, to admire; much which requires the fostering hand of nurture and improvement. We see the Irish breaking out into frequent and obstinate rebellions; we see them, on the other hand, labouring under oppression, the fruitful parent of insurrection. It will cease to be matter of surprise that they have continued in a rude and uncivilized state, long after we became polished and refined, if we reflect that their moral

and political character has never been permitted to expand like ours; and that the spirit, which alone gives dignity and energy to nations, has been systematically depressed. To this cause I have always attributed the observation truly made upon the state of Ireland, that it is a century behind this country in all the improvements and embellishments of life. The continual wars, in which it has been engaged, have made the inhabitants a brave and warlike people; but they have been unfavourable to the progress of cultivation,---the natural result of a tranquil and steady form of government.

The Revolution in 1688, from which we date the establishment of our own liberties, communicated none of its benefits to Ireland: on the contrary, it operated in diminution of her former liberties, and in extinction of her old interests. It gave rise to penal statutes, to disqualifications, and to a transfer of property unparalleled perhaps in the history of any country,----with an exception always to that stupendous revolution which has torn asunder the ancient frame of French Government. The nature of the context, at the æra of the Revolution in 1688, was
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between two adverse nations, in which the superiour power exercised the claims and privileges of a conqueror. In the spirit of conquest, the Popery Laws were framed, and the confiscations in the north of Ireland were effected; measures of severity, which, notwithstanding the lapse of a century, still rankle in the breasts of Irishmen. Within these few years, a more liberal system of policy has more justly appreciated the claims and pretensions of the sister kingdom; many valuable privileges have been secured to Ireland; many important concessions have been made by Great Britain: still grievances subsist and claims are preferred, which undoubtedly merit every attention; and which, if neglected, may give rise to the most serious and fatal consequences.

It will be the object of these pages, to state shortly the nature of the claims and the causes of the complaints alleged; to discuss them impartially; and to examine whether they are well founded.

In order to enter upon this inquiry, it will be necessary to consider the state and the strength of parties in Ireland; their views and interests; their civil and religious distinctions

distinctions; and the way in which they operate on the political situation of the country.

It is commonly asserted, I believe with accuracy, that two thirds of the inhabitants of Ireland are Catholics;---a large proportion! and one that will furnish some important reflections in the course of these observations. A less numerous, but not a less active body, are the Protestant Dissenters, chiefly inhabiting the north of Ireland; these compose about one-sixth of the whole population of the island; the rest are members of the Church of England; and, in that character, were (till very lately) exclusively qualified to fill every department and to hold every office in the state.

Between the two former descriptions, no natural alliance subsisted; on the contrary, their political and religious opinions were pointedly at variance: but the peculiar circumstances of the times, and of the situation in which they stood, have produced an union; and the very denomination they have assumed of United Irishmen, is become formidable, from this new and unnatural association of interests.

The object which the Catholics have anxiously in view is, the repeal of the
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remaining disqualifications under which they labour: they desire to hold offices, to sit in parliament, and no longer to be deprived of the most important franchise which freemen can enjoy. That such desires are natural, will be readily admitted; how far it may be politic in us to comply with them, may certainly be matter of difference of opinion. If we look back to the time when these disqualifications were first imposed, we shall see abundant reason for the caution and vigilance which were then exercised. In former ages, less infected by infidelity and more remarkable for bigotry than our own, much danger to the state was apprehended from the influence of Catholic opinions; and it was wisely obviated, by shutting the door of all civil employment against the Catholics. But, in these times, nothing is to be feared from the misguided zeal of the advocates for any religious communion. Can it be contended that the same danger, or even the shadow of the former danger, now exists? or rather, will it not be conceded, by candid and discerning men, that the lapse of a century, with the changes which (during that period) have followed in opinion, and the

firmly established possession of the Crown in the reigning family, have rendered every objection which can be raised to the Catholic emancipation, from the apprehension of political danger, too futile to be seriously insisted on.

If the danger, then, does not exist; and in so palpable a form, as to justify the severity of their exclusion on that ground; what pretence is there for dividing and separating two parts of the inhabitants of Ireland from the third part, and sacrificing the political interests of this large majority?

Is it a matter of indifference, that so great a portion of the community should be deprived of all political power and emolument, though they not only contribute their proportion of pecuniary aid to the exigencies of the state, but (what is a stronger claim to remuneration) contribute also their full proportion of obedience to the laws; of affection to the sovereign; of valour, exertion, and public spirit, in the hour of danger?

The enlightened spirit of the times in which we live, has given birth to a religious and civil liberty unknown to our ancestors: men are now permitted to worship the deity
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in that form which they believe to be most acceptable to him: they are no longer persecuted by that spirit of bigotry, which, in its nature and effects, is most opposite to the mild spirit of christian charity. But political toleration (if I may use the expression) has not yet made good its claims and pretensions to the protection of the State. The Penal Laws against the Catholics, for a long time, disgraced our Statute Book; they interfered with the civil and religious freedom of the subject in the most essential points; and they are now repealed; but the political emancipation of the Catholics is still resisted, and their pretensions are treated as presumptuous and unreasonable.

I am aware, an opinion generally prevails in this country that Ireland ought to be satisfied with the concessions already made to her; and that the Catholics in particular, who have gained much of late, should ask for nothing more. It has been urged by Mr. Pitt in the House of Commons, and within these few nights by Lord Grenville, in the House of Lords, that "we have given to the Legislature of Ireland the right of superintending the whole internal policy of that country.

We have declared that the interests of Ireland shall have for their security the independence of the Parliament of Ireland. We have redressed the grievances of the Catholics. We have not indeed admitted their claim to sit in Parliament, nor their right to hold offices; but we have given them the important privilege of voting for Members. They are virtually represented, and they have nothing further in reason or in justice to complain of."--- Very different are my ideas of reason and of justice. You have, I may answer, in all appearance amended the condition of the Catholics; you have, it is true, removed an odious distinction, calculated only to inspire distrust and disaffection; you have professed a willingness that two parts of Ireland should share in common with the third part the important benefits of Representation: How far you have secretly counteracted the advantages which you claim the merit of bestowing; how far you have rendered ineffectual, by a system of influence and corruption, the independence with which you boast to have crowned the Parliament of Ireland, I shall consider presently: but I here contend, that unless you have the plea of necessity to justify and to countenance your disqualification of the Catholics,

tholics, you can never, in reason or in justice, claim a right to withhold from the infinitely larger portion of the community all share of power, all distribution of emolument, all hope of obtaining the objects of honourable ambition.

In every well governed State, honours and rewards are held out as the prize of meritorious exertions, and perhaps they form the most powerful spur to human actions. If you confine the operation of these powerful incentives to a particular description of men, and cut off from all other members of the State the possibility of attaining the common objects of pursuit, you evidently discourage individual exertions, and in so doing, you circumscribe the limits of national prosperity. But this is not all---you not only contract the efforts of talent and of genius, and deprive the state of the benefits it would derive from them, but you set up a boundary line of distinction between men who ought to have common ties and a common interest in the welfare of their country,

Whatever may be the peculiar forms of religious worship best adapted as men suppose to the religious opinions they entertain, their
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civil rights can vary little, because they stand on the same footing of interest: they claim protection from the civil power in exchange for the support they lend to it. But unless what may be termed political power stands as a security for the enjoyment of civil liberty, there will be no protection to freedom against the inroads and encroachments of power.

Moderation and sufferance may possibly lend as much assistance to the Catholics, as they would derive from an undisputed participation of power and authority; but can it be reasonably expected that two parts of the inhabitants of any country, as well affected to the established government as the third part, should be contented to hold their liberties by so precarious a tenure? Mark the consequences which may follow!---the hour of persecution may come, and desperate counsels may prevail:---what then would be the situation of men, who, excluded from all share of power and emolument, and deprived of all means of counteracting their enemies designs, must either crouch under the iron rod of oppression, or have recourse to open resistance---the last terrible appeal from persecution.

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But is there any thing in the conduct of the Irish Catholics which leads us to doubt the sincerity of their loyalty, and to render necessary this separation of their interests. Upon a late occasion, were their dispositions at all equivocal? When the French Fleet rode in triumph in the Irish Channel, and proudly insulted the Irish coast, did the Catholics give umbrage or satisfaction to the Executive Government? Did they afford encouragement, or the remotest semblance of any, to the enemy? No such thing; on the contrary, men of all descriptions and parties, infinitely varying in their political opinions and their civil relations, all in one sentiment conspired, and with one effort co-operated in repelling the common enemy and defending their common country.

Was such decided conduct, I would ask, in such a perilous crisis, no pledge of the loyalty of Irishmen; and does it form no claim on the notice and gratitude of Englishmen? Barren praise is all the remuneration we bestow on men, who have proved themselves ready to sacrifice their lives and their fortunes in defence of a constitution, to which it is contended they are disaffected, and from the
benefits

benefits of which, on the ground of that disaffection, we still persist to exclude them.

In the darker ages, when the world was sunk in ignorance, and men conceived that all tenets of religion and all modes of worship which differed from their own were criminal, they presumed to force upon others the adoption of their own sentiments; and, in thus forcibly propagating their opinions, they often proceeded to murder and extirpation. Witness the memorable massacre of St. Bartholomew at Paris, and the no less disgraceful fires which burnt in our own capital * such were the effects of those sanguinary persecutions we read of now with horror. But though we shudder at the recollection of these enormities, and disavow the sentiments which produced them, it may be a question whether we are not actuated by the same intolerant spirit, when we exclude any description of men from the participation of the common rights which their fellow-citizens enjoy, on the sole ground of a difference in the religions they profess. Let us examine if the history of the present century will at all justify the distinctions which now subsist in Ireland, or whether any events have taken place within that period

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* In bringing forward arguments to prove the expediency of Catholic Emancipation it would have been judicious to have passed over in silence "the massacre of St. Bartholomew & the fires of Smithfield" —

which shew the affinity between civil conduct and religious opinion, or the way in which they reciprocally act upon each other.

What was the conduct of the Dissenters in the Rebellion of 1715 and of 1745 : a formidable invasion headed by the hereditary claimant to the throne, struck a panic into the public mind, which was much increased by the appearance of success first attendant on his expedition. A more tempting opportunity could hardly have occurred to indulge in the disaffection which has been charged upon the Dissenters. Did they in either of those critical junctures lend any assistance to the Pretender ? or, if they hesitated to engage so deeply in the cause, did they appear indifferent and lukewarm in defence of the reigning family and of the constitution by law established ? on the contrary, their memorable exertions at that time, both in England and Ireland, contributed to maintain the Constitution inviolate, and to fix the House of Brunswick on the throne of these kingdoms. It is worthy of remark, that, at that momentous period, the Dissenters disdained to shelter themselves in the incapacity of holding commissions under which they then laboured, but at the peril of

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the penalties they were incurring by Act of Parliament, they came boldly forward, and displayed that loyalty and attachment, which, in the opinion of some wise and able men, merited a better reward than the indemnity which they afterwards obtained. They had no other inducement to this line of conduct but that disinterested sense of honour, which, in great and generous minds, is superiour to every selfish consideration.

*Non me lætorum comitem, rebusve secundis
Accipis, in curas venio, partemque laborum.*

The Irish Parliament, at that time, seemed to entertain a more lively sense of their services than we did; for they voted, that whoever should bring a prosecution upon the Test Act against any Protestant Dissenter, for having taken up arms in defence of the state, should be considered as an enemy to his country and a Jacobite. The Irish Parliament has again preceded us, in estimating rightly the claims and merits of the dissenters. It is now eighteen years since the repeal of the Test Act in Ireland;----has any evil arisen to the state, from removing the incapacity? The Dissenters are still dissatisfied; and the Catholics, though

though invested with a new important franchise, still prefer farther claims.

I am not now arguing on the reasonableness or unreasonableness of their pretensions: I will show presently, the cause and the nature of the grievances complained of: at present, I wish to demonstrate, from the experience of a century, that no danger has arisen to the constitution of Great Britain or of Ireland, from the difference of religious opinions which prevails among the several descriptions of Catholics and Protestant Dissenters.

If this be true, the distinctions have been unnecessary; the disunion has been impolitic, which is created by the different degrees of countenance and protection afforded by the Legislature to the different members of the same community.

But it may be objected----Principles of universal toleration have much to recommend them in theory, and plausibly accord with the liberal and enlightened spirit of the age; but, when reduced to practice, they are open to various objections, and abound with danger. During the present reign, the Crown has manifested a disposition to benefit the Irish by large concessions, and has granted them very
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important privileges. In the year 1779, the Legislature removed the incapacities under which the Dissenters laboured; the Test Act was repealed; and the Dissenters are now eligible to seats in Parliament: in the year 1782, the Legislature of Ireland was rendered independent of this country: in 1785, the Irish Resolutions made the Irish partakers of the inestimable advantages of our trade and commerce; we generously shared with them the riches we drew from all quarters of the globe: in 1793, the Catholics were invested with the privilege of voting for representatives of their own choice, and their interests are no longer now at the mercy of a legislature, which is not the organ of their will. If, indeed, all those benefits were really and substantially conferred, and the Irish were put into actual possession of them; still, this would be no reason why other benefits, and more ample privileges, should be withheld; provided the Irish could satisfactorily establish their claims to an extension of such advantages.

But let us put this question home to ourselves.---Are the improvements we have made in the political constitution of Ireland good in theory

theory only, and in their practical effect counteracted by the system which the Executive Government pursues? or, have they been permitted to have their full effect, and undisturbed operation? This question will be best answered, by considering two or three very material points in the situation of Ireland.

Let us look at the Parliament of Ireland, and examine how far it is dependent on the British Government, though independent of the British Legislature.

It has been forcibly observed by the greatest statesman of the present day, that the Irish Government is a mirror, in which the abuses of this Constitution are strongly reflected. As far as I have been able to appreciate the justness of this remark, by an attentive consideration of the subject, I can say, that a more faithful or apposite illustration could not have been made of the abuses now existing in Ireland: its Parliament is composed of three hundred members;----a strong presumptive evidence of the venality and corruption which prevail there, arises from this striking circumstance, that, in the present disastrous and calamitous state of public affairs, the opposition to the measures of Administration is so

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small as to be hardly worth noticing. The numbers of the minority, it will be said, cannot be considered as any test of the purity of Parliament : generally speaking, I admit it ; but the present alarming crisis should form an exception to the general rule. If, at a time when all public measures are attended with defeat and disgrace ; when our alliances abroad have been so ill concerted, as successively one after another to be detached from us ; our credit at home so shattered and broken, that we are now in the very gulph of bankruptcy ; when the want of protection afforded to Ireland, and the danger to which she was consequently exposed on a late memorable occasion, is so notorious, as to become the common theme of conversation, and the subject of universal reprobation throughout the kingdom ; when a system of measures for the internal government of Ireland has been adopted, new and unknown to the genius and spirit of a free constitution ; when, I say, these various and accumulated causes of complaint subsist, and I see the Parliament of Ireland---instead of exercising the rights or discharging the duties of an independent legislature---echo back the plans

plans and determinations of the British Cabinet; when I hear nineteen or twenty members only in the House of Commons, and seven or eight in the House of Lords, raising their feeble voices against the measures of such an administration; I am compelled to say, this Legislature, though it has the outward ostensible form of independence, is subject to the secret invisible control of the British Government. Let us advert to what has passed in the Irish House of Commons within these few months.

In the debate, which took place on General Lake's Proclamation, after Mr. Grattan's motion had been negatived by a large majority, a very temperate amendment was brought forward, the tendency of which was to pledge the house to examine into the circumstances of Ulster, to solicit the documents by which General Lake had been induced to issue the order in question, and to advise the Lord Lieutenant to restrain its operation to those parts of the province which were in a state of actual disturbance: nineteen members only could be found to support the amendment, though it recommended inquiry upon a subject which of all others required the most

deliberate procedure, the greatest caution, and all the information which could be obtained by the most serious investigation. The lives of men, the peace of the country, the harmony and good understanding of the two kingdoms, were at stake; a little time only, a fuller examination of facts, and a limitation of the order to those parts of Ulster which were actually convulsed, was all that the amendment suggested; and yet, nineteen members only voted for it! Am I uncandid, then, in presuming that in such a House of Commons men do not speak their free unbiassed sentiments, but that some controlling power influences their determinations?---the matter, however, does not rest merely on presumption.

It has been asserted, and offered to be proved, in the Irish Parliament---it has been repeated and re-urged in the British House of Commons---that it had been the system of Government, by the sale of Peerages, to raise a fund to purchase the representation of the people of Ireland: It was offered to be proved, at the bar of the House of Commons, that a majority of that House were
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creatures of the Crown *. This was no light charge, nor hastily brought forward ; but seriously insisted on by men, whose public character and private virtues ought to have given weight and authority to the statement they produced. But no inquiry was adopted----
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* Mr. GEORGE PONSONBY, in his speech on the 6th of March, 1792, asserted, that Administration, (even before the splitting the Weighmasterhip of Cork into three, for the purpose of bribing three members of Parliament) had, in the Irish House of Commons—One Hundred and Ten Placemen and Pensioners! He also stated, that the gross revenue of Ireland was one million six hundred thousand pounds, of which one eighth part (two hundred thousand pounds!) was divided among Members of Parliament.

Also Mr. CURRAN, in the same session, pledged himself to prove, if necessary, that, out of the three hundred Members constituting the Irish Parliament, two hundred and four were returned without the interference of the people. No reply was made, and the facts remained uncontradicted.—But, in truth, Mr. Curran understated the corruption of the Irish Parliament; for, of the three hundred members which compose it,

Forty-one Temporal Peers	- -	return	112
Four Spiritual Lords	- - - -	do.	8
Private Persons	- - - - -	do.	96
Thirty-two Counties	- - - - -	do.	64
Free Cities	- - - - -	do.	10
Free Boroughs	- - - - -	do.	6
Potwalloping	- - - - -		4
Total			300

the assertion was confidently made ; the challenge was openly given ;---but it was prudently declined on the part of Government. What conclusion, then, must we draw ?---we cannot help inferring that the fact is true, as stated ; and, if it is true, what becomes of the boasted independence of the Irish Legislature ? The last state of that ill-fated constitution is worse than the first ! for, when the Irish Legislature was dependent upon ours, it might at least look up to a wise and deliberate body acting upon public grounds for the advancement of public interests : but, now that they have obtained an independence on the British Legislature, and gained the object of their wishes, they become a prey to the all-prevailing influence of an Executive Government, and are not so much free agents as they were before.

So that Government and Proprietors return Two Hundred and Sixteen Members out of Three Hundred—This is called an Independent Legislature, and every species of Reform is held unnecessary—nay, what is more, the advocates for it are stigmatised as disaffected and Jacobinical. It should seem that these facts need only be stated to make their due impression on the public mind, and to excite the disgust which naturally arises from the exposure of such political corruption.

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If this fact wanted further confirmation, I need only advert to the recent dismissal of two Irish Noblemen, the one from his place of Postmaster-General, the other from the Hanaper Office. The former was dismissed avowedly for the part he took in the debate on General Lake's Proclamation, the other for having generally expressed his disapprobation of the coercive system now adopted in Ireland.---And shall I be told in answer, that the Crown has the prerogative of appointing and removing its officers at pleasure? undoubtedly it has; but this, like all other prerogatives, is to be exercised for the good of the people: and when in consequence of a vote conscientiously given upon a subject the most important perhaps ever agitated in any assembly, I see a man ignominiously dismissed from his office, with no other motive assigned but the part he took, and the vote he gave on the occasion; I say, the Minister advising that dismissal, abuses the prerogative of the Crown, and makes it the tool and instrument of faction---I say, he gratifies his resentment at the expense of the interests of his country; for what is this, but proclaiming that whoever dares to think for himself, or to oppose in any

instance the mandate of the Executive Government, shall be deprived of his place, stripped of his employment, and held out to the world as an object of resentment and of punishment.

But in proportion as the substance of independence is lost, the shadow is carefully preserved. Every body must recollect the strong and popular ground in which the Minister intrenched himself, when he opposed the motion lately brought forward in the House of Commons for an Address to his Majesty, praying him to take into consideration the distracted state of Ireland, &c. He resisted the motion, on the impropriety of interfering in the concerns of the Irish Legislature, and the danger of encroaching on that independence which we had solemnly and unequivocally recognised. To those who recollect the debates on the Irish Resolutions in 1785, it must be matter of curiosity to observe the striking difference of opinions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer entertained on this subject in the years 1785 and 1797. In the debate of the other night, it was insisted, that any such ill-timed interference would operate as a direct infringement on the independence of the Irish Parliament: In 1785, the fourth Irish proposition

sition was introduced by the same Minister, and carried, in spite of the opposition made to it, on this very ground; nor was his delicacy at all wounded upon that occasion, though every topic was repeatedly and forcibly urged which could place in the strongest point of view the projected control of the British over the Irish Legislature. Through such different mediums do men view the same objects, as they make for or against their own measures.

But, perhaps, it may be said, that the concessions lately made to the Catholics and the Dissenters are not clogged with any political drawback whatsoever, and are wholly uninterrupted in their beneficial effects by the same causes which affect the independence of the Irish Legislature?

This is by no means the case: the Catholics now have the privilege of voting for Members of Parliament; but, except in the counties, the representation of Ireland is in what is here denominated *Close Boroughs*. It is averred, that the animosities which formerly subsisted are anxiously fomented by the Executive Government, and a determination is made to exclude the Catholics by every possible

ble means from the Corporations. This is a pitiful evasion of the privilege we have conferred, and is a breach of faith constituting one of the grievances which the Catholics complain of.

But it is not always safe and prudent to complain. When the mind is exasperated, it is apt to express its feelings with acrimony; and what escapes us in such moments, very often excites apprehensions which we are unconscious of having raised.

I am willing to apologize, on this ground, for the conduct of Administration towards Ireland. Doubts, jealousies, and suspicions were entertained of persons, enjoying the most unblemished reputation, possessing large property, and whose loyalty had ever stood unquestioned. Against such men, charges have been brought and prosecutions instituted: they have been tried by juries of the country, and acquitted. But the conduct of Government has not escaped severe animadversion: the unfounded accusation of innocent men has given just and universal cause of alarm; it has excited animosities and discontents, which have since ripened into acts of insurrection: the confidence which ought to subsist

subsist, in well-governed states, between the rulers and the people, has been totally destroyed; and thus, has the foundation been laid of that anarchy and confusion, which at last required nothing less than the interference of an armed force to suppress. To these disorders, remedies have been applied; but not such as were calculated to remove them: a system of harsh and violent measures has been adopted, ill according with the nature and temper of Irishmen; and lastly, *force*, naked unqualified FORCE, has been resorted to----and that of the most insulting and degrading nature.

The Convention Bill---the Bill, enabling certain persons to transport offenders *without trial*---the Suspension of the Habeas Corpus ---the Infurrection Bill---with all their terrible consequences, have been successively introduced, and have superseded the constitutional authorities of the old law. Under some of these Bills, those persons, against whom it was thought convictions could be procured, were apprehended and brought to trial:---under others, those upon whom it was impossible to attach guilt, were transported, without the ceremony of trial or the form of conviction. The baneful effects of these
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measures we contemplate in the insurrections they have given birth to; but the time is not far distant, when we shall look back, with the same mixture of astonishment and indignation, on the infatuated councils which produced them, as we do now on the déplorable consequences which have flowed from them.

But with the additional safeguards of the Bills I have commented upon, the Executive Government did not feel sufficiently protected. Their inefficacy had neither demonstrated the impolicy of severe laws in general, nor deterred the same Government from resorting to similar but still stronger exertions of authority. It was thought necessary to prevent the people, who were the objects of jealousy, from having arms in their possession; and a general disarming of the north of Ireland was effected, with a rigour only to be justified by the existence of the danger represented. What was the order issued by General Lake? ---It was an order to take, *by force*, from the King's subjects throughout the province of Ulster, those arms which the law gave every man to defend his life and property!---This was, indeed, acting----in the fashionable phraseology of modern politics---with a vigour

gour beyond the law, and beyond the known limits of prerogative: it was putting the fairest province in Ireland out of the pale and protection of the law, and subjecting it to the horrible effects of military discipline.

But let the impartial and experienced observer reflect, if such modes of coercion are at any time calculated to win over the disaffected and to restore that submission which can be depended upon as lasting and sincere: or whether their natural and inevitable tendency is not to widen subsisting breaches, and to separate without hopes of reconciliation contending interests? An obedience enforced by the terror of the sword, and in which the affections have no part, may gratify the pride but cannot much contribute to the repose of any government; because, as there is no security for the continuance of such submission, the fears and alarms of government must be constantly excited by the possibility of new commotions, as often as an opportunity arises of successful resistance.

If, to this consideration, we add the vast disproportion in numbers between those who represent the government of Ireland and live under its protection, and those (comprising
Catho-

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Catholics and Dissenters) who either labour under incapacities or other grievances ; the just apprehensions of a government, acting upon principles of force and compulsion, will be greatly magnified : since it will require more than the common exertions of an active and vigilant administration to oppose the resistance which it must constantly anticipate.

This reflection alone ought to suggest the policy of mild and temperate councils ; calculated to restore confidence and reconcile animosities, instead of such as tend only to perpetuate distrust and opposition.

It is a lamentable truth, that nations, like individuals, seldom profit as they ought by the experience of past events. The relative situation in which Ireland stands at present to this country is so nearly similar, in many respects, to the situation in which America stood to us at the beginning of the last war, that it is matter of astonishment we are not forcibly struck with the resemblance, and disposed to profit by so memorable an example. Our American Colonies were allied to us by a common bond of union : they spoke our language ; they adopted, in a certain extent, our form of government : they might
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be called our children; and we certainly exercised a parental authority over them, though we betrayed none of the kindness and indulgence of a parent. When those discontents first appeared, which afterwards ripened into resistance (or rebellion as we proudly called it) various and different were the opinions of men upon the conduct which it was our best interest to pursue.---Some were for prudent management and healing councils, thinking force the most dangerous and the most inefficacious remedy that could be applied. Such men moved conciliatory propositions and the repeal of obnoxious bills: they contended strenuously for admitting the Americans to an interest in the Constitution of Great Britain, and for laying the foundation of their obedience in the share they were to reap of its benefits. Others thought what they termed prompt and vigorous measures, the only ones that could restore our authority, and recal the Americans to a due sense of their allegiance: These men treated every concession on our parts as an abandonment of our dignity, and a dereliction of our right: they were for enforcing obedience at the point of the bayonet, and crushing opposition in its birth.

birth. Weak infatuated men! who had never marked the course of human action, or studied the workings of the human mind.--- The opposition of two millions of men, founded on the sense of grievances, can no more be destroyed by force, than the arguments of truth and reason can be vanquished by the same weapons. But, unhappily for this country, the councils of the wise were rejected, and the projects of the foolish were espoused. The success was such as might be expected.--- The Colonies established their independence, and separated themselves for ever from the British Empire.

Let us turn aside from fruitless unavailing regrets to the means of avoiding similar calamities.

Ireland is still more closely united to Great Britain, than America was before her separation: the local situation of Ireland, close at our side, must ever render her an object of our immediate interest. No Atlantic intervenes--- none of the causes which weaken intercourse by distance can operate, as in America---the ties of union are likewise drawn closer by other circumstances.---The great landholders of Ireland live almost wholly in this country---they enjoy

enjoy posts of emolument and honour here, and it is only occasionally that they visit their tenants and dependents in the sister kingdom ; but the sinews of their strengths, the bulk of their fortunes is in Ireland : though their habits, their friendships, and their connexions are English, their property is Irish ;---and where their treasure is, their hearts must be also.---They can neither view with indifference measures which endanger the peace of Ireland, nor (if we give them credit for proper feelings) can they feel otherwise than tremblingly alive to her political abasement. This description of men is far from inconsiderable. Another class deeply interested in her welfare are the numerous relations of persons who have passed from hence to Ireland (an easy emigration) and have settled there in various trades and manufactures ; these with the infinite combination of relationship and dependency, which must soon be created, form a large portion of the inhabitants of Great Britain. Add to these a still poorer class of artificers and labourers, who having no permanent footing in either country, have sought their fortunes in either as circumstance and accident originally directed them, many of whom have obtained a settlement in

Ireland, and still maintain an intercourse with their various connexions in the mother country. The interests of all these persons are so mixed and embodied together, that it is impossible to separate them, and they would be themselves at a loss to pronounce to which country they belong.

Ireland then may without an exaggerated statement, be considered as a component part of ourselves ; and we are quarrelling with our own shadow, when we level our resentment against our friends, our allies, our own kindred!--So much for the unnatural warfare we are engaged in. If the interests of America were ever dear to us, those of Ireland are still dearer ; if the Americans were our friends and our relations, the Irish are our sons and our brothers : We have a common country, a common language, a common polity ; and, though disputes and altercations may sometimes arise between us (as they will occasionally between the best friends and the nearest relations), mutual concessions, *not hostility*, should be resorted to, and every means of reconciliation should be tried, before we determine upon a final breach and separation.

But

But the question of policy is still open:---A cold unfeeling minister may weigh in nice scales the advantages or the disadvantages which will result to Great Britain from the increase of power she is called upon to communicate to Ireland; whilst the benevolent and enlightened statesman, extending his views to the durable prosperity of the whole empire, is solicitous to consolidate its interests, by listening to the various claims of its detached but component parts.

To the most superficial observer, the value and importance of our connexion with Ireland must be evident; to her strength, we are greatly indebted for the large military force we have raised during the present war, and still more from the continual supplies and additions it has received from the recruiting service.

Nor have her exertions to man our navy been less meritorious; her landmen and seamen have fought our battles and bled in our cause, In proportion to the population of Ireland and to the number of forces raised in Great Britain, the efforts of the Irish in the prosecution of the war have been greater than ours. What pretence, then, have we for turning a deaf ear to their claims, and to

the voice of their complaints ? Gratitude and policy both compel us to give them a patient hearing, and to hold out all the encouragement to which they are so well entitled from the merit of their services.

It is evident, from the statement I have made, that the means of assistance we derive from Ireland are far from inconsiderable :----What if these means were taken out of our scale, and put into that of the enemy ? Every friend to his country must deprecate so great a calamity : but the best and most true friend to his country will, in the present alarming crisis, contemplate the danger, and state it fairly to the public.

Let it then be remembered, that we have an active intriguing enemy to contend with,----ever on the watch to avail himself of any disposition in foreign nations to shake off their old connexions, and to worship the rising genius of the new republic. This system of fraternization, so dangerous to all the regular governments of Europe, was no sooner promulgated, than it gave just and universal alarm. It has been since qualified and restricted by the explanations given to it, but the principle remains uncontradicted,

dicted, and is acted upon by the French as often as they have means and opportunity of carrying it into execution; their rapid and unexampled conquests have much contributed to the propagation of this system. Whereever they carried their victorious arms, they have introduced new habits of thinking, new principles of legislation, new systems of policy; they have sided systematically with the people, in opposition to their governors; and they have always affected to compassionate the situation of the former, and to contrast it with their their own freedom: their conduct in Holland, in the Netherlands, and in Italy, sufficiently evinces their plan of operation. How then, would they act in Ireland, if any opening was given to their interference?---passionately desirous, as they are, to humble the pride of this country, and to wound it in the part most vulnerable. How, on the other hand, would the Irish listen, in the present temper and disposition of their minds, to overtures of fraternization?---Put out of the protection of the law, placed under the dominion of the sword, alarmed by indiscriminate accusation, irritated by the system of coercive measures which the Executive Go-

vernment pursues---it is not unreasonable to think they might be tempted to renounce altogether their connexion with Great Britain, and, availing themselves like the Americans of the protection and assistance of France, might as confidently (perhaps as successfully) proclaim their independence. The peace which the French have concluded with the Austrians may greatly facilitate this attempt : having finished their career, and resting now from their labours in all other parts of Europe, they have pledged themselves to concentrate their hostilities against this country. With this view, they will (not improbably) turn their thoughts to Ireland, and, observing the discontented state of that kingdom, will endeavour to detach it from our interest.

Is the case I put improbable? Indeed, the very measures the French have adopted since the failure of the late Negotiation, clearly demonstrate their intentions---matters now must, in the nature of things, be drawing to some conclusion.---An Army has been appointed, pompously styled "The Army of England;" perhaps it may be destined to serve in Ireland---the distracted state of that kingdom may stimulate the French to hazard again another
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invasion.---Who will venture to affirm it will not be better concerted, and attended with better success than the former one? Who will promise that the winds and waves shall again befriend us, and drive the enemy from our coasts? Perhaps, here I may be told, that the glorious victory we have recently obtained over the Dutch Fleet, will secure us against all apprehension of an Irish invasion---to the merits of that splendid and critical victory, I most joyfully pay my feeble tribute of unfeigned and unbounded admiration.---It is not too much to say, that the three great victories we have obtained at sea during the War, (not to mention individual acts of heroism) have raised the reputation of Great Britain as a naval power, to a degree of celebrity never yet attained by any other nation of the world; and, in some degree, they compensate for the errors and incapacities which have uniformly marked the progress of the War; but, after all, I would rather trust to the affections of the Irish in case of invasion, to their loyal dispositions and hearty concurrence in the common cause, than to the strength of our Fleets, however powerful; in the affections of the Irish people rests our best hope of retaining

possession of Ireland. This security is of a fixed and certain kind---what depends on our Fleets, depends also on the winds which waft them, and must in its nature to a great degree be uncertain and precarious.

Six months ago it was authenticated by the Report of the Secret Committee, that an opposition had been formed in Ireland, no less dangerous from its extent and combination than from the method and design with which it was organized.---Oaths had been taken, signs appointed, plans discovered which shewed too plainly how general and how determined was the nature of the resistance we might expect. We were naturally alarmed by the Report of the Secret Committee---it made a deep and serious impression on the public mind---the magnitude of the danger represented, led us to assent in some degree to those strong measures which the Executive Government had long had it in contemplation to pursue. The people of England saw without concern large bodies of troops poured into Ireland, but they little anticipated those bloody tragedies which were destined to be acted on the theatre of the sister kingdom.---They did not immediately foresee what dreadful

ful calamities an enraged soldiery will indiscriminately inflict on the innocent and guilty, where they are taught to despise the enemy they contend with, and more particularly where the contest they are engaged in bears the appearance of a civil warfare. These heart-rending transactions have extended their baneful effects beyond the circle of private and individual misery which they engendered: they have tended to alienate the minds of men, before sound and well-affected to the state; they have shaken the confidence of virtuous and well-disposed subjects, who, judging only from the consequences produced, have attributed to the system itself the fatal excrescences growing out of a system originally bad and injudicious.

I am not putting this matter in too strong a light: let those who are best acquainted with the present state of Ireland, and have felt the pulse of the country, report upon the nature and progress of the disorders which prevail there; let them speak, not of the temper of men's minds in particular towns and districts only, but of the general temper and disposition of the people as far as they can be fairly and impartially collected.---Ask
 them,

them, if the large military establishment we have in Ireland, or any possible force we can send there, is capable of wresting the progress of the discontents which exist, and which are daily increasing. In truth, this report has been solemnly made in the most public manner, in the most dignified assembly of the country, by a man possessing highly the public estimation: it has not been contradicted: the nation has heard it with emotions of heartfelt concern---the nation now sees the worse than fruitless tendency of a system of violence and coercion; it looks to other measures of a different stamp and character: it observes that the great military force, sent from hence to Ireland, has in vain disarmed the disaffected, and has in vain awed the country into a temporary obedience, The numbers of United Irishmen, instead of being diminished, are increased in a triple ratio; discontents and heartburnings, instead of being allayed, are multiplied and extended!---who shall say, when or how their effects will be manifested.

Here, then, it may be reasonably asked---What course do I venture to recommend, and what are the remedies I suggest to the evils I have delineated?

They appear to me to be in our own hands, to lie at our own door, to assume the most pleasing form, and to promise the most encouraging success.---Immediate concession to Ireland of all her reasonable claims, and conciliation on a broad and durable basis, are the sovereign medicines I would apply. This is the way I would “minister to the mind diseased.”

Reform, I would urge, radically reform the Parliament of Ireland, and cleanse that Augæan stable of its corruption.---Admit the Catholics in common with the Protestants and Dissenters to seats in Parliament ; allow them to hold offices of trust, and abolish all civil and religious distinctions ; give the people of Ireland an interest in the British constitution ; and begin this good work by repealing those obnoxious Bills, which have sown the seeds of distrust and disaffection. Then will the Irish of the North and of the South, of the East, and of the West, unite, not to subvert, but to establish your government, and to render it respected. It may then be reasonably hoped that those who have wandered from the right path, will voluntarily return to a sense of their duty and allegiance ; that they
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will then rally round the throne of these kingdoms, and spurn the Ambassadors of the new Republic. These are my opinions, founded as well on the natural propensities of men, as sanctioned and corroborated by the experience of past events. On a similar question, comprehending similar interests, the sentiments of a great writer, now dead, but who lived to see the completion of his own prophecies, occur frequently to my recollection: "My
 " hold on the colonies, (says that great man)
 " is in the close affection which grows from
 " common names, from kindred blood, from
 " similar privileges, and equal protection.
 " These are ties which, though light as air,
 " are strong as links of iron. Let the colonies
 " always keep the idea of their civil rights
 " associated with your Government, they will
 " cling and grapple to you, and no force will
 " be of power to tear them from your allegiance.
 " But let it be once understood that
 " their government may be one thing and their
 " privileges another, that these two things
 " may exist without any mutual relation---the
 " cement is gone, the cohesion is loosened,
 " and every thing hastens to decay and dissolution.
 " As long as you have the wisdom to
 " keep

“ keep the sovereign authority of this country
 “ as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred tem-
 “ ple consecrated to our common faith :---
 “ wherever the chosen race and sons of Eng-
 “ land worship freedom, they will turn their
 “ faces towards you ; the more they multiply,
 “ the more friends you will have : the more
 “ ardently they love liberty, the more perfect
 “ will be their obedience. Deny them this
 “ participation of freedom, and you break
 “ that sole bond which originally made and
 “ must still preserve the unity of the empire.”

These are the words of a sound politician and
 a true philosopher, couched in all the sublime
 and beautiful imagery with which the rich-
 ness of his imagination could illustrate and
 adorn any subject he handled :---they now
 rise up in judgment against us ! they deserved
 profound attention when they were uttered,
 but they received none ; they have since had
 the stamp and seal of wisdom set upon them,
 by the confirmation of their truth in the final
 separation of America.

It is the obvious use and province of history
 to instruct by example---and shall we derive
 no benefit from the history of a great transac-
 tion to which we ourselves were parties, and
 the

the particulars of which are the subject of our own immediate recollection ?

We attempted to tax America, insisting that she was virtually represented: the Americans combated the attempt, first with reason and argument, but (finding these weapons ineffectual) they at last unsheathed the sword: We endeavoured to force them to compliance; but we were forced, in our turn, to abandon the undertaking: We tried to govern America by penal statutes; but we found that such a system served only to fan the flame of disaffection, and to establish the resistance we hoped to have extinguished.

Let us listen then, at length, to the warning voice of example; and not drive men to desperation, who, with kind and gentle treatment, may be led to love and to obey the government under which they live! Let us grant the Irish what they ask, and we shall command their gratitude and lasting obedience in future. The loyalty and affections of a great and brave people, is surely no mean price, no unimportant return, for the favours we are called upon to confer; in according with them, we shall diffuse joy and satisfaction among three millions of men, and dispel the gloomy
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suspicion and discontent which at present hang over the sister country. The straight path lies before us, pointed out by experience, and impossible to be mistaken: let us not leave it for the crooked intricate path of a narrow policy, which will lead to mazes of inextricable difficulty and disappointment !

—Quà signa sequendi

Falleret indeprœnsus et irremeabilis error..

In the present posture of affairs, no time is to be lost :---what we do, we must do quickly ; If concessions are to be made, they must be made immediately, and with a good grace, or the effect of them will be wholly lost. The first pledge, which perhaps it may be wise and politic in us to give the Irish of the sincerity of our friendly dispositions, is to pay the debt we owe them ;---we owe them a Lord Lieutenant, invested with full powers to carry into effect the fond object of their wishes and their hopes ; we first engendered these hopes, and then cruelly strangled them in the birth : we taught the Irish to believe that their prayers would be heard and their grievances redressed : we gave them a foretaste of the good we promised, and suddenly dashed the cup of enjoyment from their lips.

What

What gave Lord Fitzwilliam's short-lived administration the popularity it enjoyed?--- but the expectation of a radical change in the system of governing Ireland? How far that system would have been carried into execution, or whether the expectations formed did not go beyond the changes in contemplation, I will not now consider. In private concerns, we hold it unpardonable and unprincipled conduct to raise hopes we never mean to realise: political concerns are supposed to claim privileges of their own and exemptions from moral rules; but, even in a political view, the event has shewn how narrow and short-sighted has been the temporising system we adopted, how unavailing, nay, how false the momentary delusion we created.

Send back, then, to the people of Ireland the Lord Lieutenant of their choice: this, perhaps, will be considered as laying the first stone of their liberties, and may be hailed as a good omen of the sincerity of our intentions. We shall have proceeded further than we imagine, if we can remove the ill impressions which our late conduct has excited, and if we can pave the way to an unsuspicious intercourse between the two nations, and a liberal discussion of their respective interests in future.

To those who have the welfare of both at heart, the present is an anxious moment. It is big with the fate of the two countries. Ireland must, from this time, be the fast friend or the bitter enemy of Great Britain:---it must be, more firmly than ever, united to the British Crown, or it must be totally detached from it, and substantially (though perhaps not formally) annexed to the Republic of France. Our councils, not our arms, will decide this great question. My earnest and unfeigned hopes are, that those councils may be conciliatory and pacific, not hostile, to Ireland; that they may extinguish the discontents which prevail there, by removing the causes which produced them; lastly---that, in restoring peace and tranquility to the sister kingdom, we may establish the security and prosperity of the whole British Empire.

Such are my wishes and my hopes---I have no other motive in submitting these observations to the public, than what arises from a conviction that all discussions on political questions, conducted with temper, will be ultimately subservient to the great cause of truth,

THE END.

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